

CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE
ON DISARMAMENT

PRIVATE
ENDC/PV.7
22 March 1962
ENGLISH

THE UNIVERSITY
OF MICHIGAN

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DOCUMENT
COLLECTION

FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SEVENTH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 22 March 1962, at 10 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. TELLO

(Mexico)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Brazil:

Mr. de MELLO-FRANCO
Mr. C.A. BERNARDES
Mr. RODRIGUES RIBAS

Bulgaria:

Mr. C. LOUCANOV
Mr. M. TARABANOV
Mr. V. PALINE
Mr. N. MINTCHEV

Burma:

U Thi HAN
Mr. J. BARRINGTON
U Tin MAUNG
U Aye LWIN

Canada:

Mr. H. GREEN
Mr. E.L.M. BURNS
Mr. J.E.G. HARDY
Mr. G. IGNATIEFF

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. V. DAVID
Mr. J. HAJEK
Mr. E. PEPICH
Mr. M. ZEMLA

Ethiopia:

Mr. K. YIFRU
Mr. T. GEBRE-EGZY
Mr. M. HAMID
Mr. T. NEKASHA

India:

Mr. M.J. DESAI
Mr. A.S. LALL
Mr. A.S. MEHTA

PRESENT AT THE TABLE (cont'd.)

Italy:

Mr. C. RUSSO
Mr. F. CAVALLETTI
Mr. A. CAGIATI
Mr. C. COSTA-RIGHINI

Mexico:

Mr. M. TELLO
Mr. L. PADILLA NERVO
Mr. E. CALDERON PUIG
Miss E. AGUIRRE

Nigeria:

Mr. J. WACHUKU
Mr. A.A. ATTA
Mr. A. HAASTRUP
Mr. V.N. CHIBUNDU

Poland:

Mr. A. RAPACKI
Mr. M. NASZKOWSKI
Mr. M. LACHS
Mr. M. BIEN

Romania:

Mr. C. MANESCU
Mr. G. MACOVESCU
Mr. C. SANDRU
Mr. M. MALITZA

Sweden:

Mrs. A. MYRDAL
Baron C.H. von PLATEN
Mr. G.A. WESTRING
Mr. H. BLIX

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:

Mr. A.A. GROMYKO
Mr. V.A. ZORIN
Mr. B.D. MAKASHEV

PRESENT AT THE TABLE (cont'd)

United Arab Republic:

Mr. M. FAWZI
Mr. A.F. HASSAN
Mr. A. PALAAT
Mr. M.S. AHMED

United Kingdom:

The Earl of HOME
Mr. J.B. GODBER
Sir Michael WRIGHT
Mr. J.S.H. SHATTOCK

United States of America:

Mr. D. RUSK
Mr. A. DEAN
Mr. W.C. FOSTER
Mr. C.C. STELLE

Special Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. O. LOUTFI

Deputies to the Special Representative
of the Secretary-General:

Mr. T.G. NARAYANAN
Mr. W. EPSTEIN

The CHAIRMAN (Mexico): I declare open the seventh meeting of the Conference. I have only one speaker on the list and that is myself, as representative of Mexico.

(continued in Spanish): My Government appreciates the honour of Mexico's inclusion in the Eighteen Nation Committee and is fully aware of the responsibility that distinction entails.

Fortunately for us, the problem of disarmament does not arise in my country. From the international point of view, we clearly do not constitute a danger to any other State and our relations with all nations are based on mutual respect and consideration. We have no fear of being subjected to any aggression whatsoever.

On many occasions we have unreservedly stated our unshakable determination to submit any disputes that may arise between Mexico and any other country to the procedures for peaceful settlement, in particular to the arbitration or judgement of the International Court of Justice. At the IXth International Conference of American States, held in 1948, the Mexican Government took an active, even a predominant, part in formulating the American Treaty on Pacific Settlement, which provides for compulsory arbitration as a last resort that cannot be refused. Since that time, and although the Treaty, which is also known as the Pact of Bogota, has not been ratified by all the signatories, we have opposed its being amended merely because, as amended, it would be unanimously approved by the twenty-one republics of the western hemisphere. We believe, on the contrary, that it is better to have an instrument forming so dense a network that no dispute can escape peaceful settlement than to have a weak and ineffective instrument, even if it is binding on all States. The reason why I have drawn attention to this Treaty is that the principles formulated by the United States of America and the Soviet Union particularly mention "the establishment of reliable procedures for the peaceful settlement of disputes ..." ENDC/57.

No procedure will be completely reliable unless it provides for compulsory arbitration as the final instance.

I should like to say a few words on this subject. Since we signed the United Nations Charter in 1945 and renewed the Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice, many conflicts and disputes have arisen, yet we can say -- and I do so with regret -- that the International Court of Justice has failed to provide a solution in many cases. We have spoken here of the cessation of nuclear tests. We have referred to the advantages of declaring certain areas and countries non-nuclear zones, but we have laid too little stress on the desirability of instituting a reliable procedure for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

(The Chairman, Mexico)

I do not propose to put forward any definite proposal at this stage. But I would like to suggest to all representatives -- and the Mexican delegation, of course, reserves the right to submit proposals at the appropriate time -- that, in addition to dealing with disarmament, we should consider the need to draw up the basic provisions of a treaty under which all disputes, absolutely all disputes, among States would be settled by peaceful means.

After all, the difference between the life of nations and that of individuals is merely one of degree. Thus, just as crimes and offences by individuals are gradually decreasing thanks to the existence of laws and the operations of the courts, we may hope that one day law and justice will have universal sway.

However, the fact that the question of disarmament and the economic burden of a high military potential do not directly affect Mexico does not mean that we are not interested in the problem. It is obvious that the solution depends in the first place on an agreement between the great Powers, but all countries, both great and small, should take care not to underestimate the obligations of every one of them.

When we drafted the United Nations Charter in April 1945 we stated, before anything else, our determination "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind". The first objective, and I would say the only one of essential and lasting value, is to eliminate war. There is no more effective means of doing so than to put an end to the arms race.

The Covenant of the League of Nations recognized the necessity of fully satisfying this hope of humanity. There is no need for me to recall the failure of the Disarmament Conference or to remind you of the blood, tears and sweat which, true to the prediction of that great man, Sir Winston Churchill, flowed so abundantly from 1939 to 1945. Now, owing to the progress of science, disarmament has become the most urgent problem of the day.

After many years of fruitless efforts to reach an agreement, two new facts enable us to come to this meeting with a moderate degree of optimism. I refer to the principles submitted by the governments of the United States of America and the USSR in the Joint Statement of 20 September 1961, ENDC/57, which offer a substantial basis for fruitful negotiations. The other fact is the setting-up of this Committee.

My delegation regrets the absence of France from our Committee, and we trust that it will be only temporary.

(The Chairman, Mexico)

Mexico's devotion to peace, its permanent adherence to the procedures for peaceful settlement of international disputes, its dedication to work and its unflagging desire for progress are so well known that I need not dwell on the matter now. As a country that possesses only the conventional weapons necessary to protect its internal security, Mexico can undertake in advance to support any honourable solution -- I do not say proposal, but solution -- that may be offered for the problem we are assembled here to consider.

The letter addressed by the President of Mexico to Chairman Khrushchev, in reply to the letter he was good enough to send the President on 22 February, contains the following words which define with great clarity the position we shall adopt during the work of the Eighteen Nation Committee.

"I consider it important to emphasize", wrote President Lopez Mateos, "the fundamental role which, in my view, should be played by the representatives of the States that do not possess nuclear or thermonuclear weapons in the successful performance of the most important mission which the United Nations General Assembly has entrusted to the Eighteen Nation Committee. As their countries have no immediate interest in the particular formula or formulas by which it is attempted to solve the problem, they are in a good position to play a part of moderation, to seek conciliatory formulas, to serve as a link between the great Powers, and to encourage the representatives of those Powers not to become discouraged, but, bearing in mind the magnitude of the problem, to persevere until a solution is found. Their contribution, and I can assure you in advance that the Mexican delegation will be animated by this spirit, will thus consist in harmonizing the apparently divergent interests of the other Powers, in order to ensure that the common desire which unites us all -- general and complete disarmament -- is not brought to nought by considerations which may be purely adventitious."

Many aspects of the disarmament question are unquestionably technical. Over the years it has developed into a complex and difficult problem. It must, however, be recognized that technical difficulties, which man is always capable of overcoming, are not responsible for the lack of progress in its study. The main obstacle lies in reservations which are, generally speaking, of a psychological order.

(The Chairman, Mexico)

As other speakers have already pointed out, mutual fear and mistrust must be included under this heading. The fear arises from the lack of a really effective system of collective security. Confidence is an elusive phenomenon, a state of mental serenity --- no one can account for its appearance or disappearance; no one knows how to re-create it once it is lost. Nevertheless, I believe it is not impossible, even without disarmament measures, which would immediately serve to allay public anxiety, to adopt other methods of reducing international tension and paving the way for general and complete disarmament. I venture to suggest among other possibilities, the complete cessation of, and not merely a truce in, the cold war, which could be achieved through an increasingly faithful adherence by all States to the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other States or in matters relating to their political or legal personality. In connexion with the principle of non-interference, I would mention one of the most subtle and dangerous of the ways in which it is infringed, namely, by tendentious or subversive political propaganda.

Let us hope that we may also achieve something constructive in this sphere of international relations.

Although, in coming to Geneva, my intention was to avoid making irrevocable statements which might restrict the Mexican delegation's future freedom of action -- since it is from this freedom of action that its ability to be of service largely stems -- I should nevertheless like to say a few words about nuclear weapon tests and the denuclearization of some areas or countries. I shall, in effect, merely be restating the position that Mexico has taken whenever these questions have been discussed in the United Nations.

We are opposed to nuclear tests for military purposes wherever and in whatever circumstances they may be carried out. Our attitude is so uncompromising that we did not wish to vote in favour of declaring certain areas of the world denuclearized zones -- in point of fact, we abstained -- in order to avoid giving the impression that we agreed to the principle not receiving universal application. In our view, pending the attainment of world-wide agreement, denuclearization could, can and should be brought about through voluntary and free decisions by States. Thus, the Mexican Government has resolved neither to possess nor to admit to its national territory nuclear weapons of any sort or any vehicles that might be used for their delivery. While we, of course, lack the technical or economic resources to take such action, our attitude would be the same even if that were not the case.

(The Chairman, Mexico)

Similarly, we supported both by our statements and by our votes the resolutions submitted with a view to preventing the spread of nuclear weapons.

Although we form part of the system of collective security established by the San Francisco Charter and the Charter of the Organization of American States, we do not intend to adhere to any military bloc or alliance. Such blocs and alliances are a product of the cold war and, in fact, run directly counter to the principle of collective security, which is the indispensable basis for peaceful coexistence under the system and principles laid down in the United Nations Charter. The Joint Statement by the United States of America and the Soviet Union speaks of ensuring that "war is no longer an instrument for settling international problems". If this statement denotes the emergence of a fundamental change of heart in governments and, above all, in the governments of the great Powers, and if there is in fact a readiness to renounce the sterile product of power politics, I could say, without fear of contradiction, that we are on the threshold of a new world.

Now in order to enter into this new world it is necessary, above all, to be objective -- to see the situations in the fullness of their most realistic aspects.

Mr. Green, the Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada, aptly pointed out the existence of areas of common ground or similarity in the proposals of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Our Committee will do good work if it succeeds in converting the points that are now similar into concrete proposals. That would certainly be an objective way of approaching the problem.

An examination of what the nations have been saying year after year when dealing with the problem of disarmament leads us to the conclusion that it is no easy matter to change the arguments in the discussion, because everything, or almost everything, has already been said. But there can certainly be a change of attitude. If the great Powers faced up to their responsibilities and met danger by mobilizing their resources for war, they should be even more willing to mobilize for peace, ensuring full employment, for example, with new markets for consumer goods and better prospects for the whole of mankind.

It is time to put an end to that which separates and destroys, and to unite our efforts to attain that which brings together and is constructive.

(The Chairman, Mexico)

It should be borne in mind that this is not just another meeting on disarmament. We have already had many of them. It might well be the last meeting. In the life of man, everything that constitutes a beginning or an end has a meaning. To be born or to die are acts of incalculable significance. The result of the negotiations which we are beginning can mean, for the world, an act of creation, the birth of a new life, or -- and let us pray that this will not be the case -- the beginning of the end, the epilogue to our passage on earth.

It is idle to ask whether the plans and proposals on disarmament are new or not, since the only thing that will be of any importance is to succeed in putting them into practice, in full or in part. What will have to be new is the urge to solve the problem; the will must be new, and new, too, the patience -- and we shall need much patience -- the good faith and the intention to persist in the task until positive results are achieved for the benefit of mankind.

We have not come here to pronounce high-sounding phrases or to allocate responsibilities. In this connexion, I welcome the atmosphere of calm and understanding that has prevailed in our discussions. We have not come here to make propaganda to gain sympathy for our own attitude and condemnation of the attitude of others. Our work will have to be prudent, possibly even monotonous, but without intermission or respite.

(continued in English): Speaking as Chairman, I wish to say that there will be an informal meeting of the Committee of the Whole at 4 p.m. today, only if delegations are called by the Secretariat by 2.30 p.m. to advise them that the meeting will take place. If they are not advised by 2.30 p.m., the meeting will not take place.

Lord HOME (United Kingdom): I very much hope that we shall get a recommendation that there should be a meeting this afternoon. Tomorrow morning, as I understand it, there is only one speaker left in the general debate, and we really should be getting on with the business of framing a definite programme of work. If we miss this afternoon and there is only one speaker in the general debate tomorrow morning, then we have only Friday afternoon left. I very much hope that we shall take these matters very seriously and really get down to work, because it seems to me that we are now beginning to be in danger of wasting time, and that would be unforgivable in this matter.

Mr. GREEN (Canada): I should like to support very strongly the remarks which have been made by Lord Home. We all know that within a matter of a very few days most of the Foreign Ministers have to return to their respective countries, and it seems to me that there is great importance in having these informal meetings proceed, even though there has not been agreement between the co-Chairmen on the points which were referred to them for decision. I think there should be an opportunity given to the representatives of the other countries to discuss these matters in the informal meetings. In that way it may be possible for us to reach agreement as to how we are to proceed.

I was disappointed that the informal meeting of yesterday afternoon had to be adjourned without any business being done, and I think it would be a tragedy if we were to be faced with the same situation today. This would probably mean that there would be no informal meeting tomorrow; and no informal meeting then would mean no informal meeting until next week. In that way the impetus of this Conference may very well be lost.

We have made a splendid start. There has been very fine co-operation by all of the delegations, and I think this is a very hopeful feature for the whole world. As the Foreign Minister of Mexico has said in his remarks this morning, this is not just another conference: this may be the last conference on disarmament. I submit that there is no reason why we should be bogged down here in the first few days and unable even to discuss the procedure for going ahead with the business for which we have all come here. I hope that there will be a meeting of this informal committee this afternoon. If there are points in dispute, let us argue them out. Surely that is the way to do business -- not simply to bury our heads in the sand and not meet, and to wait for something to happen. The two great Powers on various other occasions have failed to agree; that is one of the reasons it is necessary to have these disarmament conferences. I think that, if there are these points of disagreement about procedure -- mind you, not on the substance but on procedure -- if there are these points of dispute, let us get together this afternoon and iron them out.

Mr. RUSSO (Italy) (translation from French): The Italian delegation also hopes that it will be possible to meet this afternoon in order to settle the method of work the Conference is to follow. We have emphasized from the outset that this question of our method of work should not be regarded as a

(Mr. Russo, Italy)

procedural matter, because it affects the very substance of the work of the Conference. Sixteen countries have already expressed their views during the general debate. Tomorrow morning we shall have a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria. It would certainly be a very serious matter if there were to be an interruption in the work of the Conference. All of us appreciate the difficulties of the time and it is vitally necessary that we should come to grips with specific problems in the interests of achieving results as soon as possible.

The CHAIRMAN (Mexico) (translation from French): A suggestion has just been made by the United Kingdom representative, which has been supported both by the Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada and the representative of Italy, that the Committee should speed up its work. I do not know whether, between now and this afternoon, the two co-Chairmen will be able to take certain decisions which will enable us to hold a really useful meeting. Of course, I make that comment as the representative of Mexico and not as Chairman. I await the Committee's decision.

Mr. RUSK (United States of America): As one of the co-Chairmen, I should like to assure my colleagues that we shall do our very best to reach an agreement that will facilitate the meetings that have been discussed here. We will certainly take into account to the fullest possible extent the known wishes of our colleagues, and we hope that there will be a meeting this afternoon.

Lord HOME (United Kingdom): I think it would be better to assemble at any rate to hear from the co-Chairmen whether they have succeeded or failed. Perhaps we could help them if they have failed.

The CHAIRMAN (Mexico) (translation from French): A firm proposal has just been made that we should meet at 4 o'clock this afternoon, even if an agreement has not been reached.

Mr. RUSK (United States of America): I think it may be possible for the co-Chairmen to agree that we should meet at 4 o'clock this afternoon.

The CHAIRMAN (Mexico) (translation from French): Then we shall have an informal meeting at 4 o'clock this afternoon.

The Conference decided to issue the following communique:

"The Conference of the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament today held its seventh meeting at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the Chairmanship of Mr. M. Tello, Minister for Foreign Affairs and representative of Mexico.

"A statement was made by the representative of Mexico.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Friday, 23 March 1962, at 10 a.m.".

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.

